

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

- 1        1.     A method for improving business performance of a business  
2 entity, comprising:  
3            documenting one or more current business processes in an initial  
4 process map having one or more cost categories, wherein each current  
5 business process is categorized in each of the one or more cost categories  
6 that are cost dependent on the process;  
7            comparing each of one or more of the current business processes with  
8 known business processes to determine whether one or more more cost  
9 effective business processes are available for one or more respective current  
10 business processes; and  
11          creating a recommended process map comprising a set of business  
12 processes including one or more recommended business processes by  
13 substituting, in the initial process map, one or more available more cost  
14 effective business processes for one or more respective current business  
15 processes.
  
- 1        2.     The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2            implementing the recommended business processes.
  
- 1        3.     The method of claim 1, wherein creating a recommended  
2 process map further comprises:  
3            establishing one or more corresponding key performance indicators in  
4 association with each recommended business process, said key performance  
5 indicators measuring process performance.
  
- 1        4.     The method of claim 3, wherein creating a recommended  
2 process map further comprises:  
3            estimating, by cost category, costs associated with each business  
4 process; and  
5            determining a cost budget per cost category according to the estimated  
6 costs.

1       5.     The method of claim 4, further comprising:  
2       measuring the actual costs of the business processes in operation; and  
3       comparing the actual costs with the estimated costs to determine  
4       whether one or more of the cost budgets are exceeded.

1       6.     The method of claim 5, further comprising:  
2       when a cost category's budget is exceeded, determining, based on  
3       associated key performance indicators, whether any business processes in  
4       the category are performing outside an acceptable range; and  
5       correcting any business processes that are performing outside the  
6       acceptable range.

1       7.     The method of claim 6, further comprising:  
2       identifying a business process to target for replacement with a new  
3       candidate process;  
4       estimating, using the recommended process map, an overall cost effect  
5       of replacing the targeted business process with the new candidate process;  
6       and  
7       replacing the business process with the new candidate process when  
8       the overall cost effect indicates a reduced cost.

1       8.     The method of claim 7, further comprising:  
2       establishing one or more new corresponding key performance  
3       indicators for the new candidate process; and  
4       determining a new cost budget for the cost category of the new  
5       candidate process.

1       9.     The method of claim 2, wherein implementing the recommended  
2       business processes comprises:  
3       categorizing the recommended business processes into a plurality of  
4       cost savings categories according to potential cost savings; and

5                   implementing those business processes in a category providing the  
6                   most cost savings first.

1                   10.       The method of claim 1, wherein the cost categories include one  
2                   or more of service costs, product costs, and shipping costs.

1                   11.       The method of claim 1, wherein the recommended business  
2                   processes include one or more of delivery processes, inventory management,  
3                   and repairs.

1                   12.       A method for developing a business process map, comprising:  
2                   documenting one or more current business processes in an initial  
3                   process map having one or more cost categories, wherein each current  
4                   business process is categorized in each of the one or more cost categories  
5                   that are cost dependent on the process;  
6                   comparing each of one or more of the current business processes with  
7                   known business processes to determine whether one or more more cost  
8                   effective business processes are available for one or more respective current  
9                   business processes;  
10                  creating a recommended process map comprising a set of business  
11                  processes including one or more recommended businesses processes by  
12                  substituting, in the initial process map, one or more available more cost  
13                  effective business processes for one or more respective current business  
14                  processes; and  
15                  associating one or more corresponding key performance indicators  
16                  with each recommended business process in the recommended process map,  
17                  said key performance indicators measuring process performance.

1                   13.       The method of claim 12, wherein the cost categories include one  
2                   or more of service costs, product costs, and shipping costs.

1           14. The method of claim 12, wherein the recommended business  
2 processes include one or more of delivery processes, inventory management,  
3 and repairs.

1           15. A business process map, comprising:  
2           one or more cost categories;  
3           one or more business processes, wherein each current business  
4 process is categorized in each of the one or more cost categories that are  
5 cost dependent on the process; and  
6           one or more key performance indicators each associated with one or  
7 more of the business processes, said key performance indicators measuring  
8 process performance.

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